Bowling Green Transmission Project
Frequently Asked Questions

Why is TVA building a transmission line in the Bowling Green area?
A new transmission line is needed to power Bowling Green Municipal Utilities' future substation on Cave Mill Road.

Transmission lines and substations are vital to ensuring that customers have reliable electric power. Transmission lines bring electricity from TVA plants to local utilities' substations, which then distribute the power to homes, businesses, schools and farms.

BGMU currently has two substations that receive power from TVA. The first went into service in the 1940s, and the second in the early 1960s. The last upgrade was made nearly 20 years ago, in 1986.

Because the need for electricity is growing about 1.5 percent per year, BGMU expects those distribution facilities to become overloaded by summer 2007. It is necessary to build transmission facilities before a system is overloaded. Moreover, BGMU has no substations on the eastern or southern sides of the city, where the system's current and potential growth is greatest.

Will the new line mean increased electric rates?
No. Every year TVA allocates part of its budget to make necessary upgrades to its transmission system. The cost of this transmission line will be paid by TVA from its power revenues and will not result in a rate increase for BGMU customers.

Is TVA's power line a payback for BGMU's decision to stay with TVA?
No. The improvements are being made because additional power is needed by BGMU to serve the growing community. This is a joint project with TVA and BGMU working together to build a new transmission line and substation that will continue providing reliable electric service to the people and businesses in Bowling Green and meet the growing demand for power in the area.

How many options were studied?
A total of 10 different routes (comprised of 17 different segments) were evaluated. In making a decision, TVA weighs and balances all pertinent environmental, engineering, and land use considerations, as well as public input.

Why is this route preferred over other alternatives that were considered?
This route has less overall impacts than the other alternatives. This route:
- is the least expensive option, which means wise use of ratepayers' dollars,
- affects the fewest number of homes, and

● shares existing rights-of-way for half its length, which minimizes impacts to property owners and the environment.

If sharing right-of-way minimizes impacts, why wasn't one of the alternatives that shares a longer stretch of right-of-way chosen as the preferred route?
Sharing right-of-way where feasible can minimize impacts. However, part of this existing right-of-way travels through a congested commercial area, which poses several problems. Existing structures and signage would be impacted by more stringent electrical clearance requirements and the need for additional right-of-way required by the higher-voltage transmission lines (vs. lower voltage distribution lines). Due to the need for the power, the existing line cannot be taken out-of-service for construction of the new line. All of these constraints work to make sharing this section of right-of-way very expensive and impracticable.

How does TVA decide where it will build new transmission lines?
Because demand for power is the greatest in areas that are growing, it can be difficult to find a path for transmission lines. To meet this challenge, TVA is committed to an open process with full public input on locating transmission lines and facilities.

Generally, TVA identifies several alternative routes for a new transmission line by using aerial photography, a constraint map--which shows things to be avoided (homes, schools, other buildings, environmental features, historical features, etc. -- and visual inspections of the area. Property owners along the alternative routes are identified and notified by mail of an open house and comment period for input on the project. After receiving public input, TVA evaluates the information and identifies a preferred route.

For the transmission line to BGMU's substation, many options have been considered and discussed in public meetings. The open house for property owners was held in Bowling Green on Aug. 25 to present project information, get public input and answer questions about several possible alternate routes.

Shortly after that meeting, TVA learned that some property owners did not receive the letters TVA mailed, notifying them of the open house. At the request of these property owners and their attorney, we held a project-information meeting in TVA's Bowling Green office on Nov. 30. The meeting was well attended by landowners, and the public discussion period on the project was extended to Dec. 9, 2005, adding more than two months to TVA's customary comment period.

How does TVA involve the public in deciding where transmission lines are placed?
TVA makes every attempt to work with property owners throughout the project, beginning with a public open house for information and input on the project.

Following the open house, TVA accepts comments for 30 days and uses the information in the decision-making process. The final decision reflects TVA weighing and balancing public input and all pertinent environmental, engineering, and land use considerations.

Once a preferred route has been identified, TVA will conduct a detailed environmental review of the proposed route. During the review, onsite environmental data will be collected and analyzed as part of the decision-making process. This may lead to the further minor modifications of the route to minimize impacts.

For example, in the section of line near Chestnut Hill and Bent Creek Farms, TVA will work with residents to minimize easement requirements to something less than the standard 100-foot right-of-way normally required to build and maintain a transmission line.

Who will own the land along the transmission line?
Property owners retain ownership of their land. TVA obtains easements for a right-of-way to build and maintain the transmission line. Property owners are fairly compensated for the easement.

Property owners also retain use of their land for recreation and other activities. Only those activities that could potentially cause harm to people or the transmission equipment are prohibited in the right-of-way.

What happens when a property owner refuses to sell an easement?
TVA works with property owners to reach an agreement more than 90 percent of the time. For those times when an agreement cannot be reached, TVA turns to the courts to decide on a fair settlement for the easement.

Will the transmission line pose health risks?
The proposed route keeps transmission lines at an appropriate distance from homes and schools. For example, the route is 730 feet from class rooms at Cumberland Trace School. At this distance, electromagnetic fields from the new line would not add to levels currently present in the class rooms.